

BHDDH Bulletin

CRAIG S. STENNING
DIRECTOR

JUNE 29, 2012

ISSUE 4

PeaceLove Studios Launches New Programs in Their New Location

PeaceLove Studios now offers weekly classes at their new studio in Pawtucket. In January, management launched a new course catalog containing a variety of programs for people of all ages and interests. Courses range from "Hum 'n Stir", which involves self-expression through sound and movement, to "Family Art" which gives families with children an opportunity to work together on creative projects such as "My Family Story Book", "Mardi Gras Masks and Crowns" and "Shape Art". "We are excited to offer a full array of creative arts classes and programs that I hope will help others find peace of mind like it has for me," says Jeffrey Sparr, one of the founders of PeaceLove Studios. "This is another step toward our goal of creating what we call a "YMCA for Mental Health" that we hope, in the future, will be in cities and towns where they are needed and belong."



RI Awarded Grant to Increase Employment Opportunities for Individuals with Behavioral Health Disorders

The Rhode Island Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals (BHDDH) is one of only nine states that has received an Employment Development Initiative (EDI) grant, for fiscal year 2012, from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). Created by SAMHSA and its Center for Mental Health Services (CMHS), the initiative is designed to assist states with implementing activities to increase employment opportunities for individuals with mental health and/or substance use issues.

"This substantial grant will assist BHDDH in its important efforts to provide job opportunities and recovery services for Rhode Islanders with behavioral health issues," Governor Chafee said. "I applaud the agency for its positive work in this area and am confident this grant will be put to good use on behalf of the Rhode Islanders who depend on BHDDH." "This grant will support BHDDH's job development strategy for individuals with behavioral health issues," says Craig Stenning, Director of BHDDH. "Our innovative approach will be to develop and combine SAMHSA's evidence-based practice of Individual Placement and Support with certified peer wellness coaches to create employment opportunities for those served in the public behavioral health and recovery support systems."

Employment is a critical part of recovery for this population. As with any individual, employment results in increased self-esteem, self-worth and independence which lead to a better quality of life. The peer wellness coaches will specialize in employment-related services and work under the supervision of an employment specialist. For those with mental health issues, employment support services will be provided at the Hillsgrove House in Warwick and the Harbor House in Providence. Individuals with substance use disorders will receive services at the Anchor Recovery Center in Pawtucket. The \$103,000 grant covers one year. Goals for this grant include continued expansion of existing resources and services in order to transform the culture to a recovery-oriented system of care and to use this approach to establish a foundation for successful employment outcomes that can be replicated state-wide. An additional goal is to have at least 40 individuals employed by the end of the one-year period.

Director Stenning Joins State and Local Leaders at Ground-breaking for Housing Development for Disabled Adults



On May 18, Director Stenning, Senator Sheldon Whitehouse and other State and local leaders gathered to participate in the groundbreaking ceremony for a new housing development called Belmont Commons.

Located in Pawtucket, the development will consist of five, two-bedroom and five one-bedroom units and will house adults who are developmentally disabled, chronically mentally ill and/or physically challenged. Through the BHDDH Thresholds Fund, the Department contributed \$220,000 to this important project.

Three Key Events Highlight RI Mental Health Month

Governor Lincoln Chafee, Lt. Governor Elizabeth Roberts and Former Congressman Patrick Kennedy hosted a Mental Health Roundtable on Friday May 4 at the State House. Director Stenning was a member of the panel. The event brought State leaders in mental health care and coverage together with Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Administrator Pamela Hyde to address the integration of mental health parity and national health reform.

Following the Mental Health Roundtable, a Veterans' Forum on Behavioral Healthcare was held at the Rhode Island National Guard Schofield Armory in Cranston. Governor Lincoln Chafee was joined by Lt. Governor Roberts, Rhode Island National Guard Major General Kevin McBride, SAMHSA Administrator Pamela Hyde, former Congressman Patrick Kennedy, Director Stenning and other State, local and military officials.



The forum was held to bring attention to the behavioral health issues faced by active military personnel and veterans after military service. Many Rhode Island servicemen and women have experienced long and multiple deployments, which take a toll on them and their families. The Governor recently returned from reviewing operations and visiting with troops in Afghanistan.

"This is an important issue – one that is made even more significant given the fact that Rhode Island has one of the highest deployment rates in the nation," said Governor Chafee. "I recently traveled to Kuwait and Afghanistan to visit with Rhode Island troops. When I think of those brave men and women, I want to be sure that when they come back to Rhode Island their needs are being addressed in the best way possible."

"Providing services for veterans including counseling, housing and employment is critical as they re-integrate into a community", said Director Stenning. "We at BHDDH want to establish a system of support with providers who are well-trained to treat National Guard members and other military personnel returning from Iraq and Afghanistan."

Later in the afternoon, SAMHSA Administrator Pamela Hyde, former Congressman Patrick Kennedy and Director Stenning toured the site for the Health Homes initiative at the Providence Center. A State plan amendment, recently approved for Medicaid Health Homes, provides BHDDH with enhanced federal funding to coordinate physical and behavioral healthcare for individuals with serious and persistent mental health conditions. Rhode Island is the first state in the country to address coordinated care for individuals with serious mental illness and to discuss peer supports in a health homes state plan amendment.



Director Stenning Receives 2012 Partners in Housing Award for Public Service



Rhode Island Housing hosted its annual Partners in Housing Awards Celebration on Thursday May 10, 2012 at the Rhode Island State House. Executive Director of Rhode Island Housing Richard Godfrey and Governor Lincoln Chafee were among those in attendance.

The Partners in Housing Awards honors members of the housing community who demonstrate outstanding commitment and achievement in creating strong communities with good homes for all Rhode Islanders. Director Stenning has spent much of his career as a leader in creating supports for individuals with disabilities including safe, healthy and affordable homes. Rhode Island Housing presented Director Stenning with a Public Service award for his continuous efforts to create affordable homes for all Rhode Islanders.

Please submit any items that may be of interest to our readers by e-mail or fax to Deb Varga: dvarga@bhddh.ri.gov; fax: 401-462-3204.



<https://www.facebook.com/RIBHDDH>